

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEWS RELEASE

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NEBRASKA STUDENT TEST RESULTS ANNOUNCED FOR READING, MATHEMATICS, WRITING

Nearly 72 percent of Nebraska students met or exceeded state reading goals and about 63 percent met or exceeded the mathematics standards, according to 2011 state test results released today by the Nebraska Department of Education.

Reading and mathematics scores for Nebraska school districts and school buildings are available at <http://www.education.ne.gov/> as well as writing results for the state. The writing results showed that 89 percent of the state's fourth and eighth graders are proficient. From 2001-2011, students have consistently improved their writing skills, increasing proficiency levels for fourth graders by 10 percent and eighth graders by 24 percent.

Nebraska students and our schools have work to do to improve mathematics scores on state tests, said Nebraska Education Commissioner Roger Breed. Their work in writing has paid off and has begun to show improvement in reading scores, he said, noting that the baseline or first-year scores on the new state reading test improved from about 69 percent of the students meeting or exceeding standards in 2010 to 72 percent in 2011.

"Nebraska teachers have a long, successful history of helping their students meet and exceed our state's learning goals," Breed said. The mathematics standards and the state mathematics test hold the bar high, he said, to encourage students to take more rigorous math courses and four full years of mathematics at the high school level.

"Our goal is for Nebraska students to be college and career ready when they graduate from high school," Breed said.

The performance scores released today are considered the initial results since they could change slightly before the scores are final in October.

Parents will receive a report on their child's scores from their local school district soon. Materials to help parents help their child with reading, mathematics, science and writing are available through the Nebraska Department of Education's homepage at www.education.ne.gov.

Students in grades three through eight and the 11th grade were tested last spring in reading and mathematics to determine whether students were proficient on newly revised state reading and mathematics standards. More than 80 percent of those students took their tests online. School districts chose whether to administer the tests in paper/pencil or online.

Reading and mathematics scores were reported by scale scores that range from 0 to 200. Students who received a scale score of 85 and higher met or exceeded state standards. Students receiving 84 or lower are reported in the Below Standards category. The scale score ranges for both subjects are:

- Exceeds Standards: 135-200
- Meets Standards: 85-134
- Below Standards: 0-84

Writing scores were reported only for students in grades four and eight. Beginning in 2011, the Nebraska Department of Education raised the bar and began a transition toward more in depth scoring and online testing at the 11th grade, so scores were not reported this year, the pilot year. Next year, that process will be expanded to grades four and eight and results will be reported for all three grades.